



Great space design, naturally.

The legacy of Dr Stephen Kellert,
applied in today's workspaces.



Designing for life means designing with nature.

Inspiration from the father of applied biophilia



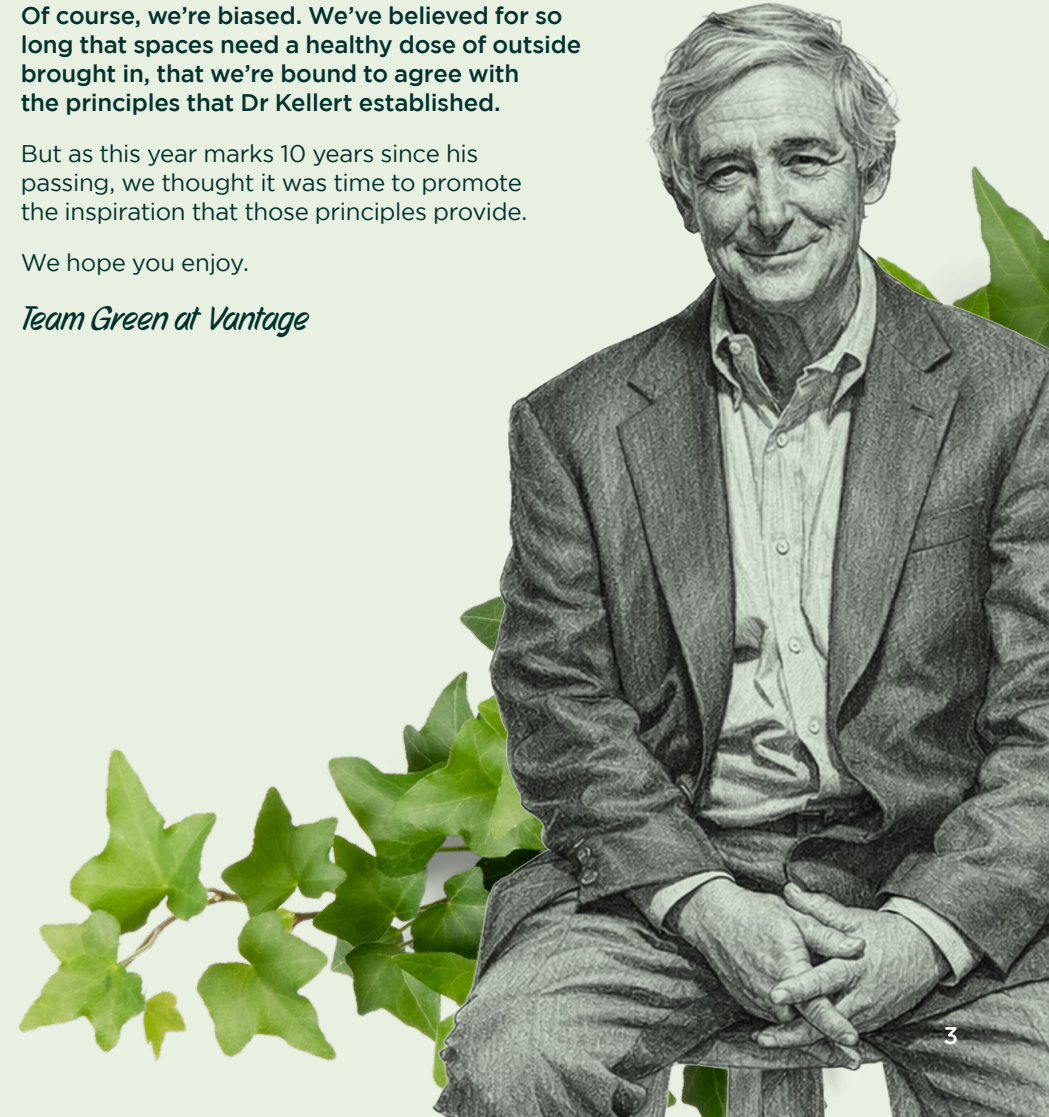
The greatest source of workspace inspiration

Of course, we're biased. We've believed for so long that spaces need a healthy dose of outside brought in, that we're bound to agree with the principles that Dr Kellert established.

But as this year marks 10 years since his passing, we thought it was time to promote the inspiration that those principles provide.

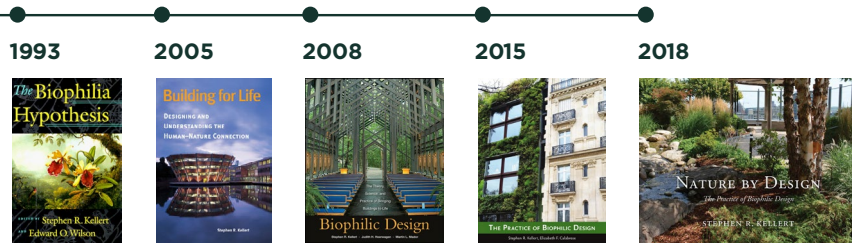
We hope you enjoy.

Team Green at Vantage



Why Kellert matters now

Stephen R. Kellert devoted his life to understanding the human need for connection with nature. Today, as organisations re-evaluate the workplace, his research offers a clear compass: environments that support wellbeing, creativity and connection are those where nature is not an afterthought, but an organising principle.



Background, education and underlying philosophy

Kellert, a Yale professor of social ecology, combined psychology, environmental ethics, biology and design to explore how humans relate to nature. He argued biophilia is not a preference, but an innate human trait.

Across his books, Kellert emphasised:



An inherent human connection to natural systems



How meaning, emotion and symbolism shape spatial experience



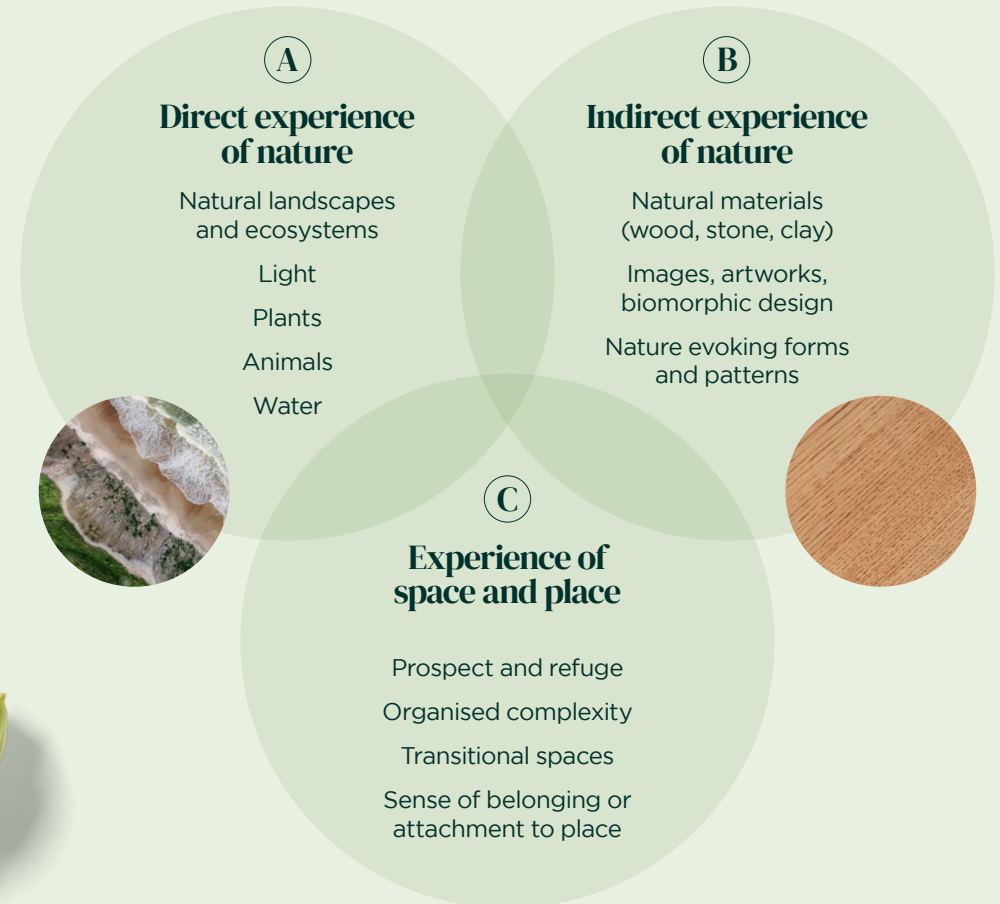
Design as a tool to strengthen or weaken this connection

At its core, his philosophy is simple: **when people thrive, organisations thrive.** And people thrive when nature is **meaningfully integrated** into the spaces they inhabit.

The roots of biophilia: where the concept came from

The term biophilia was coined by biologist E. O. Wilson, describing an innate human affinity with living systems. In *The Biophilia Hypothesis*, co edited with Kellert, this idea evolved into a multidisciplinary theory spanning ecology, psychology and design.

Kellert later translated it into a practical framework, forming the foundation of modern biophilic design.



Theory applied: how Kellert suggested bringing biophilia indoors

Kellert argued that biophilic design is not a collection of features, but a coherent design philosophy. Successful application requires intentionality, authenticity, and integration.



Incorporate living nature wherever feasible



Large specimen planting

Planted focal points and feature walls



Biophilic partitions and living dividers



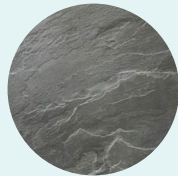
Green roofs and terraces

Potted ecosystems that change with the seasons

Use natural materials and sensory richness



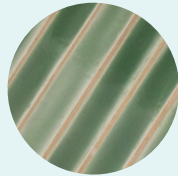
Wood with visible grain



Textured stone



Natural fibres



Warm, organic colour palettes



Materials that weather gracefully

Prioritise light, views, and spatial harmony

Access to daylight



Layered lighting that mimics circadian rhythms



Spatial contrasts - prospect for openness, refuge for focus

Visual complexity balanced with coherence

Foster emotional and symbolic connection



Artworks referencing natural imagery

Patterns derived from biology (fractals, branching structures)



Use of narrative - telling a "nature story" through the space

Why biophilic design matters: the benefits Kellert identified

Kellert's research linked biophilic design to a wide array of measurable outcomes.

Physiology

- + Reduced stress and cortisol
- + Lower heart rate and blood pressure
- + Improved sleep-wake cycles and circadian alignment

Psychological benefits

- + Elevated mood and emotional stability
- + Greater sense of calm, pleasure, and restoration
- + Reinforced sense of meaning and belonging

Organisational benefits

- + Increased productivity
- + Reduced absenteeism
- + Higher employee satisfaction and retention
- + Stronger perception of brand identity

Cognitive benefits

- + Enhanced focus
- + Higher creative output
- + Faster recovery from mental fatigue

The Kellert-inspired biophilic toolkit for workspaces



Start with living nature for the highest impact

Prioritise real planting and integrate into the fabric of the space.



Create multisensory variety

Gentle movement in foliage, textural contrasts and seasonal refreshes.



Harness natural light

Maximise daylight and use warm tone artificial lighting.



Tell a nature story

Use narrative cues and connect people emotionally to their environment.



Shape space with prospect and refuge

Alternate openness with sheltered nooks for focus and calm.



Add natural materials and textures

Wood with visible grain, stone, clay, cork, and woven fibres.



Use nature evoking forms

Incorporate curves, branching geometries and organic motifs.



Implementing Kellert's principles with conviction

At Vantage, we focus on integrating effective biophilia. We don't simply add greenery – we design planted environments that shape how people feel, connect, and perform.



Our approach is rooted in the same philosophy Kellert championed:

That nature rich spaces support healthier, happier, more productive people.



We combine design insight with botanical expertise to create planting solutions that are:



Architecturally integrated

Part of the spatial language, not an afterthought.



Innovative and expressive

Using form, shadow, movement, and seasonality to bring spaces to life.



Purposefully biophilic

Reinforcing the deep human-nature relationship through authentic, meaningful interventions.



We integrate planted biophilia as part of the space, not just decoration – helping organisations turn Kellert's principles into places people want to be.

If you're looking to create a space incorporating true biophilic principles, contact our team for a discovery session.

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